

written by

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illustrated by

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“Caring For Our Watersheds™ is an education program that engages students in preserving and improving their local watersheds through student-led solutions.”

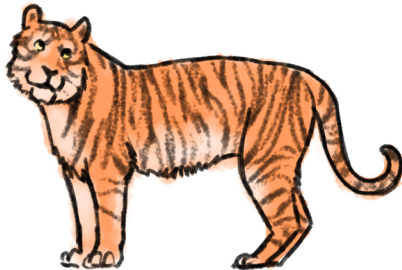
The author and illustrator of this book are grateful to the Caring For Our Watersheds™ program for funding this project.



save the day with me!



Have you ever thought about how every animal
is vital to keeping our world healthy?



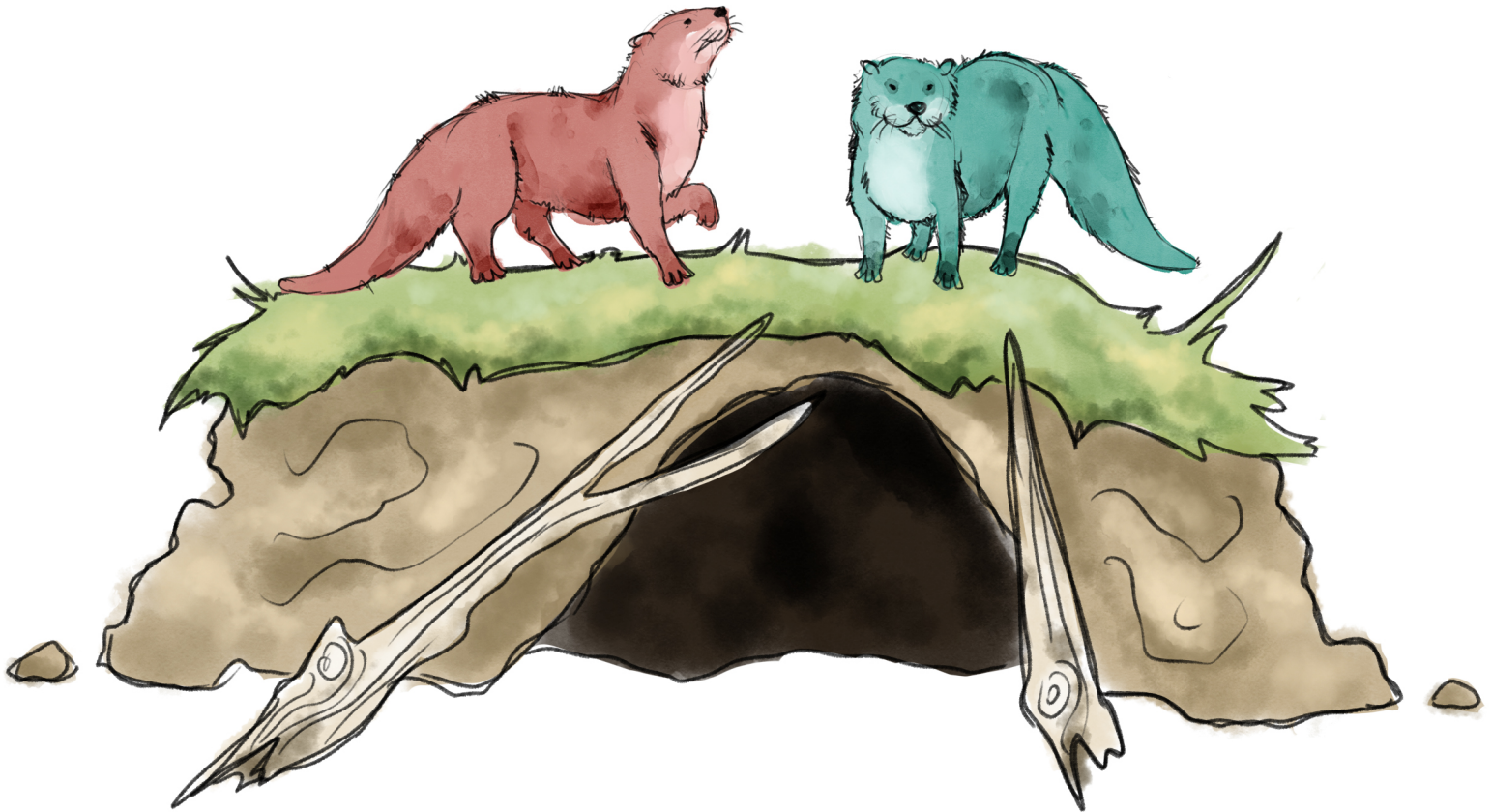
Otters help distribute nutrients into the environment and they balance fish populations so they don't grow out of control.



If there are no otters, that means the environment would be sick.
Just like if any animal went missing from the Earth.



Mama and Papa Otter live in a warm and cozy
den near the river bank.



When the flowers are blooming and the trees are green again,
Mama Otter brings new life into the world.



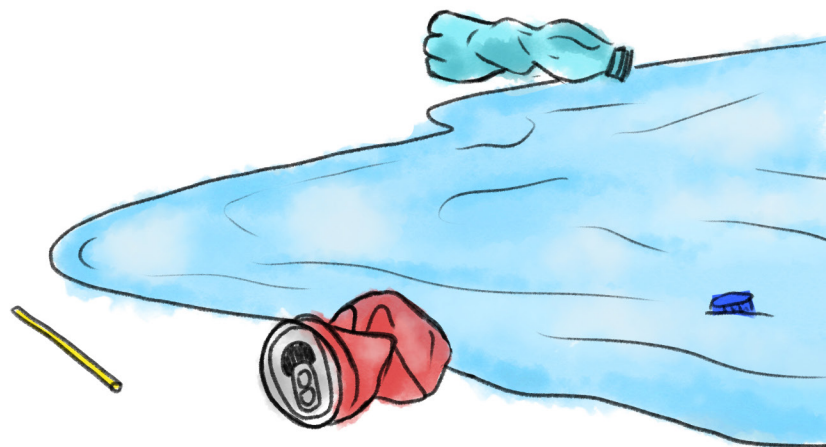
The pups squeak and squeal and roll all over each other.



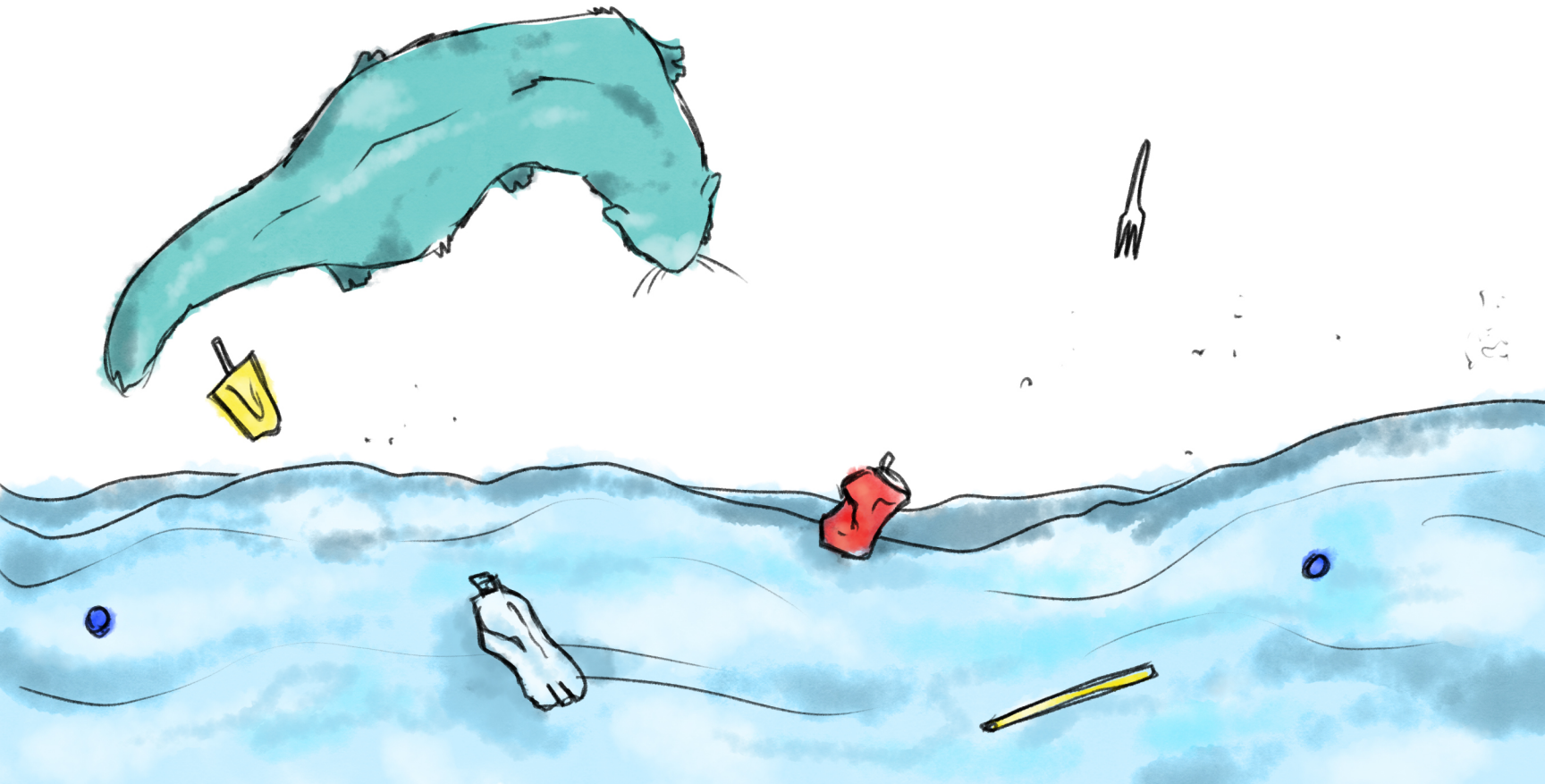
But they will be very hungry soon and Mama Otter
needs to feed herself so she can feed her pups.



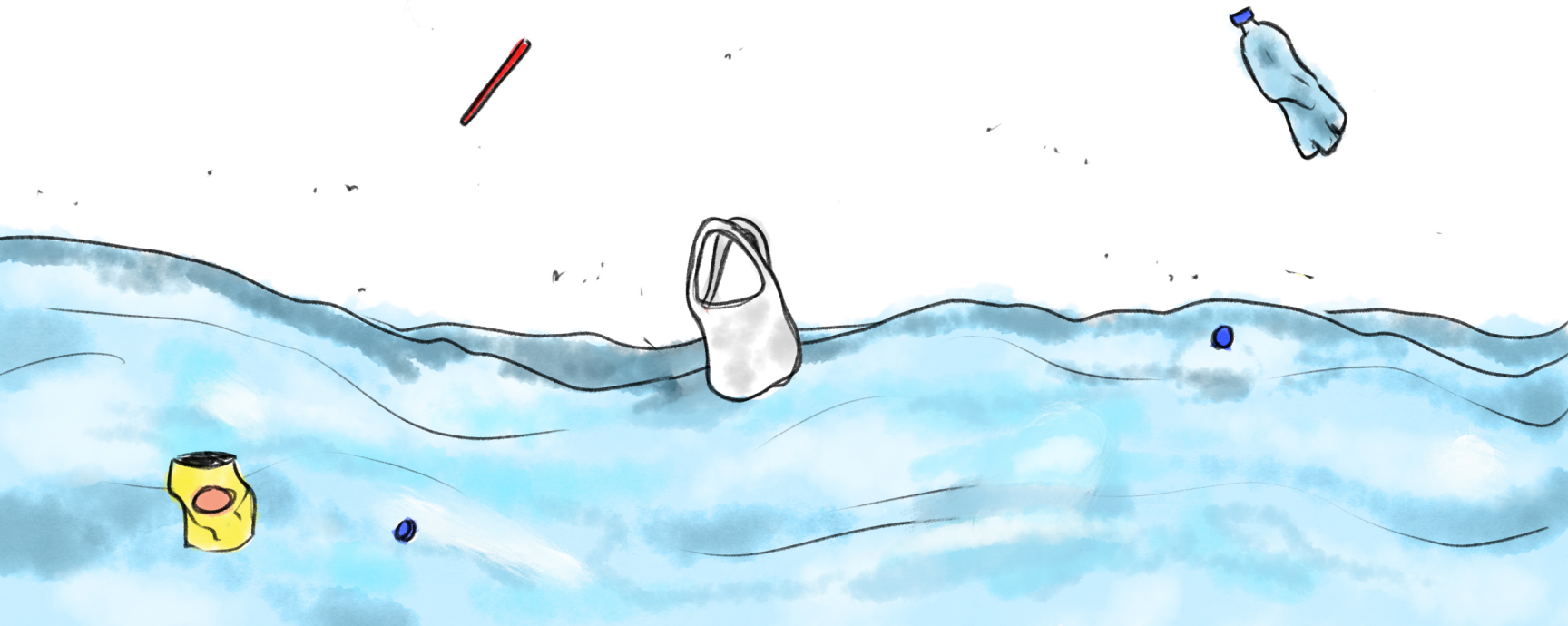
When she goes down to the river bank,
she finds a strange new fish.



She starts to discover more and more
odd looking creatures.



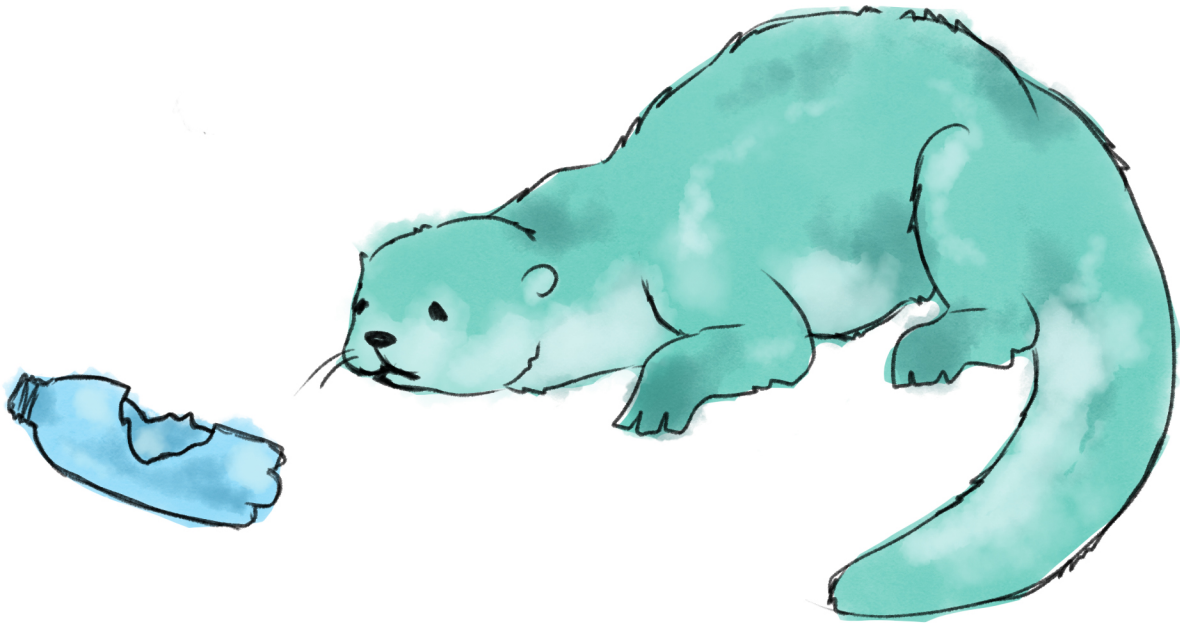
But she can't seem to find her favorite fish.
Where have they gone?



She returns home with her newfound fish. She's excited
to be able to feed her babies.



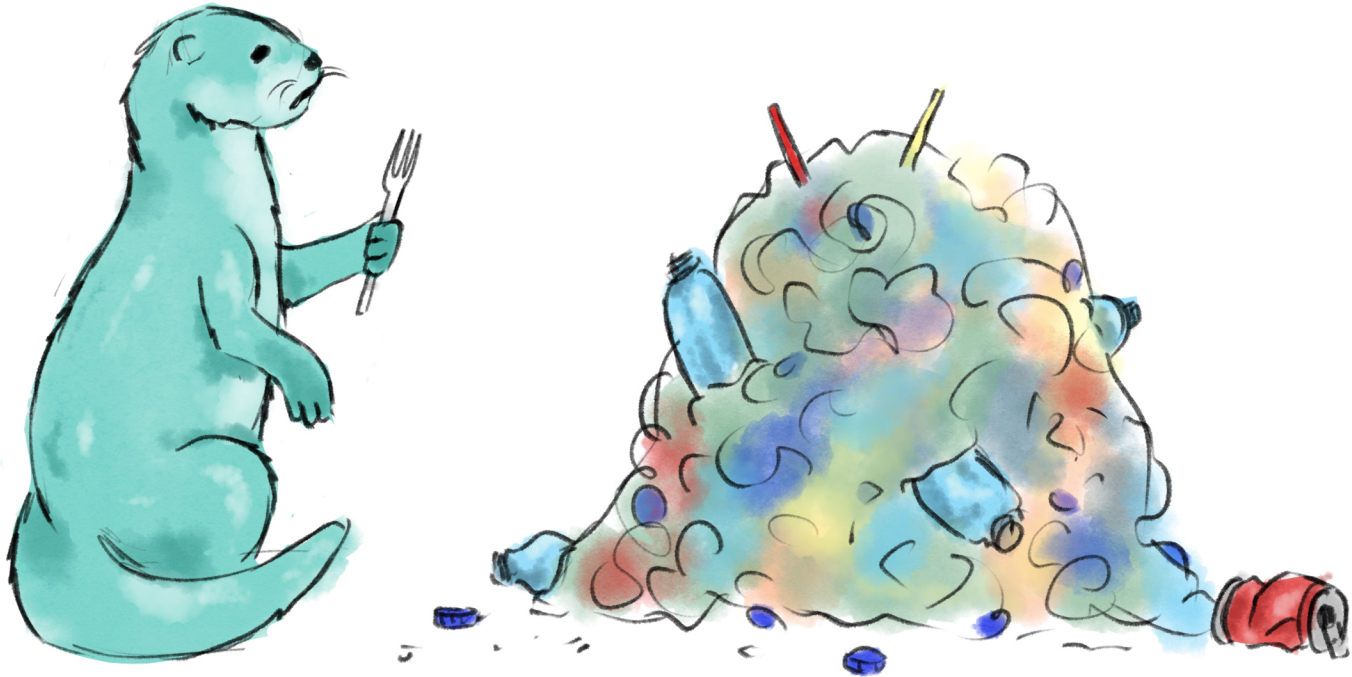
But the strange fish doesn't go down well. It's rough
and hard and hurts her stomach.



She doesn't feel very full and she is still unable to feed her puppies.
Day after day, she returns to the river, only to find that
her favorite fish hasn't returned.



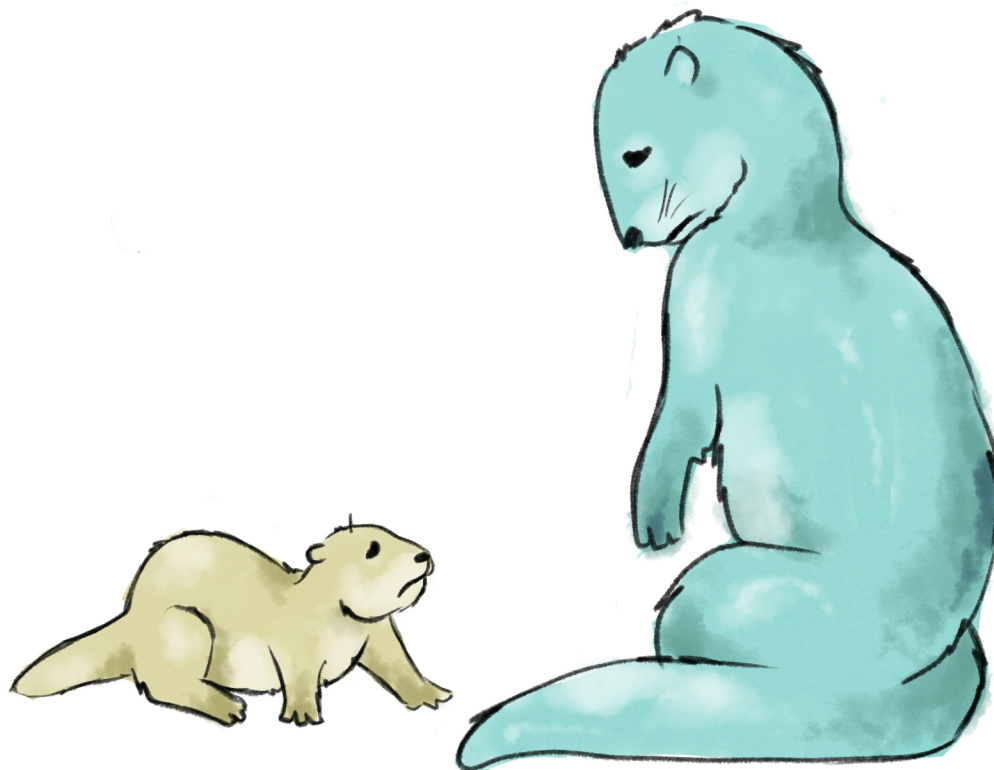
All she can see are the strange creatures sitting on the bank and floating through the water. Maybe these new fish are what scared the others away.



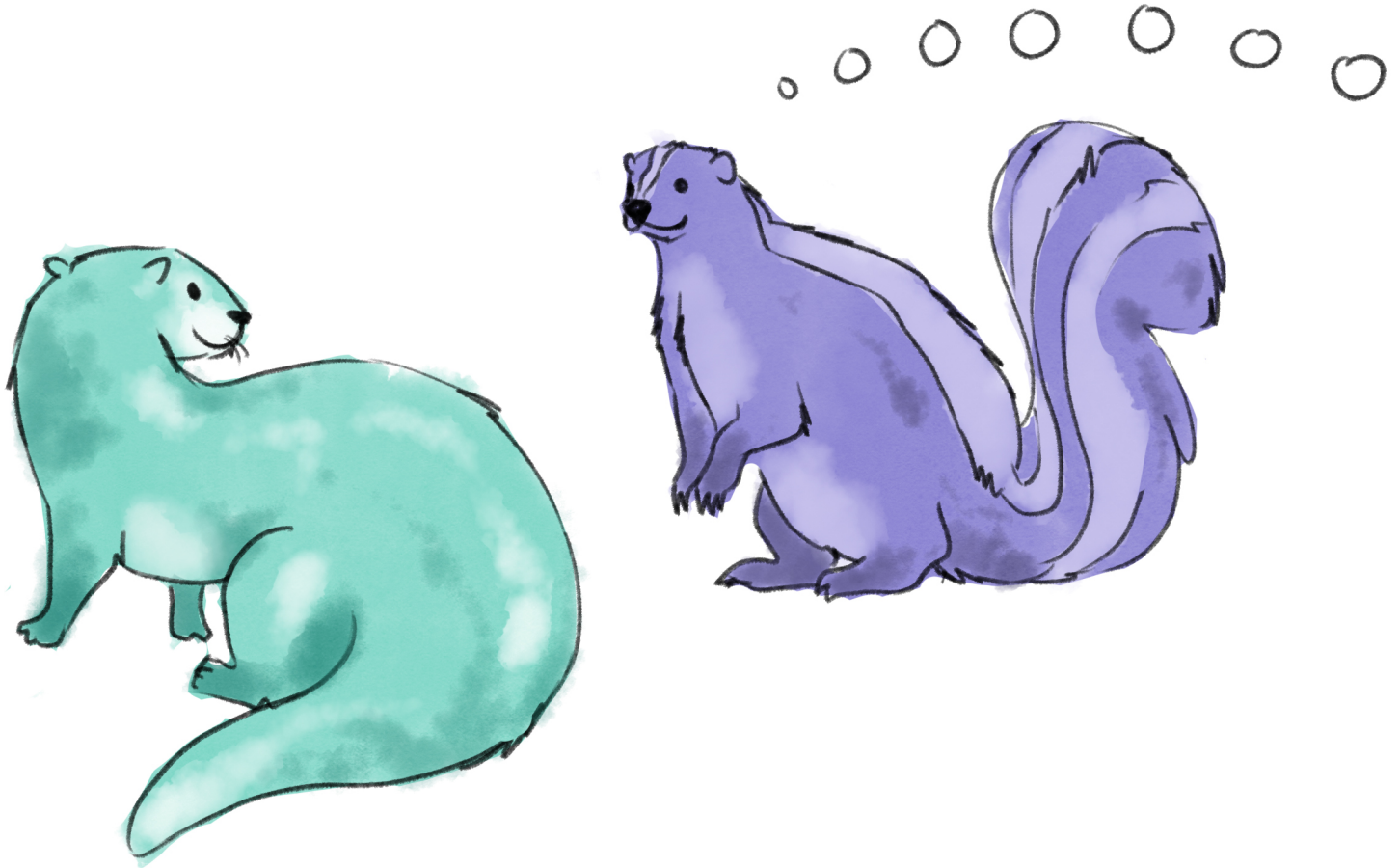
Her stomach hurts and her puppies are beginning to lose their color.



They have nothing to eat and Mama Otter doesn't know what to do.



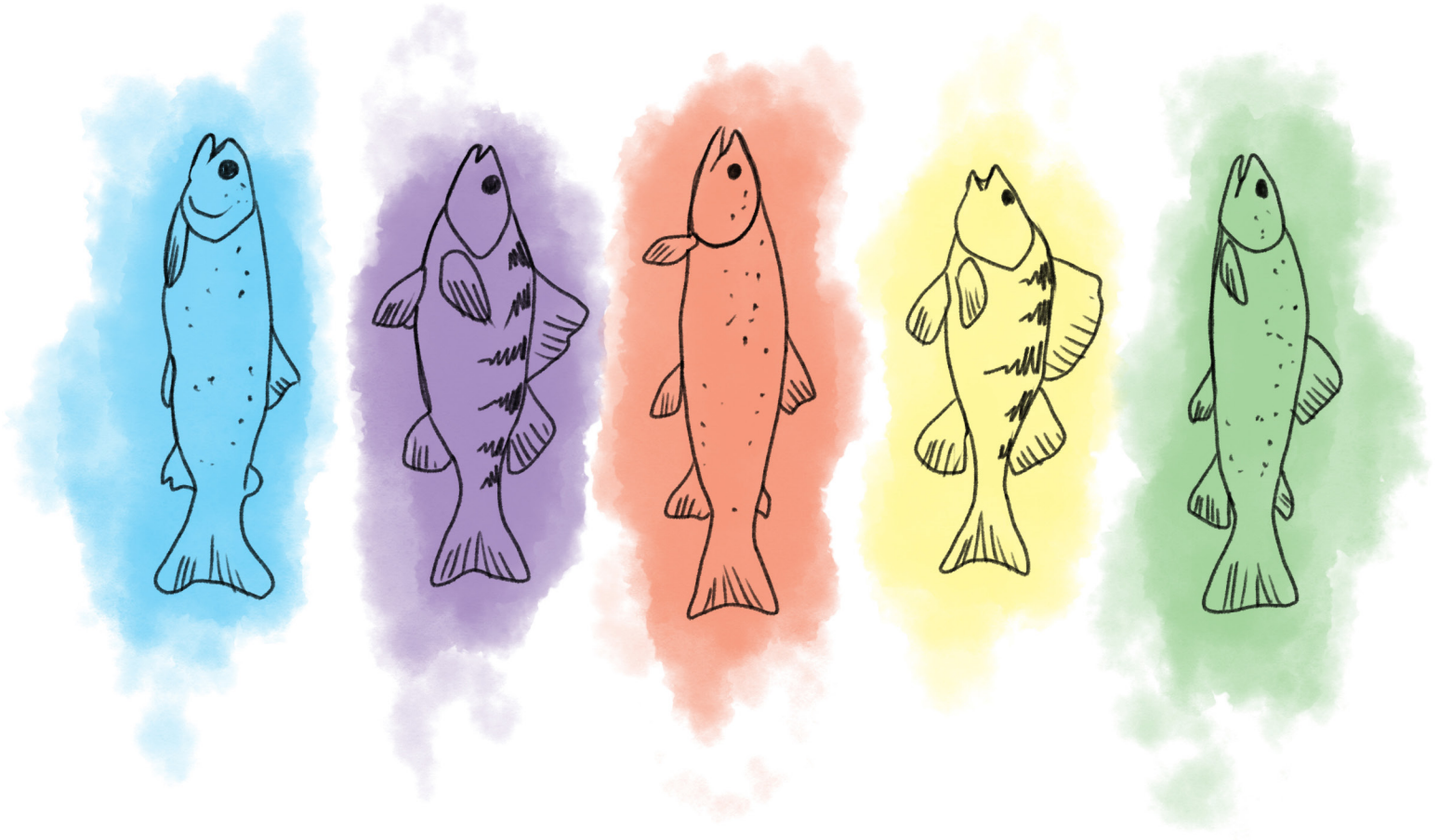
Mama Otter visits her good friend Ms. Skunk. Mama tells her about the strange fish she has found.



Ms. Skunk says, “I have seen the ones who have brought those odd creatures to the river. They have scared away the trout and the perch.”



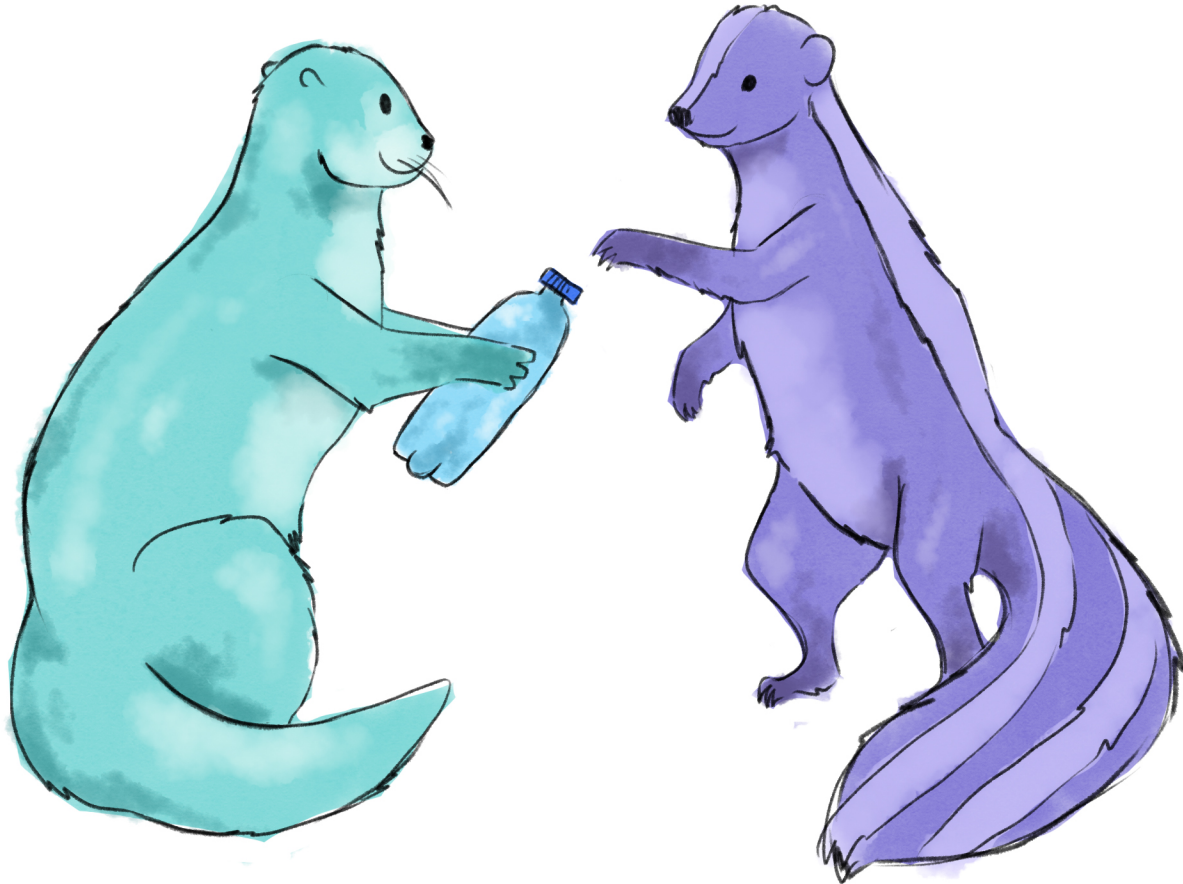
“What am I going to do without the trout and the perch?”
asks Mama Otter.



“You might go hungry.” says Ms. Skunk. Mama Otter becomes very scared for her babies.



“What if we tell them to take their strange fish back? Maybe then the trout and the perch will return,” says Mama Otter.



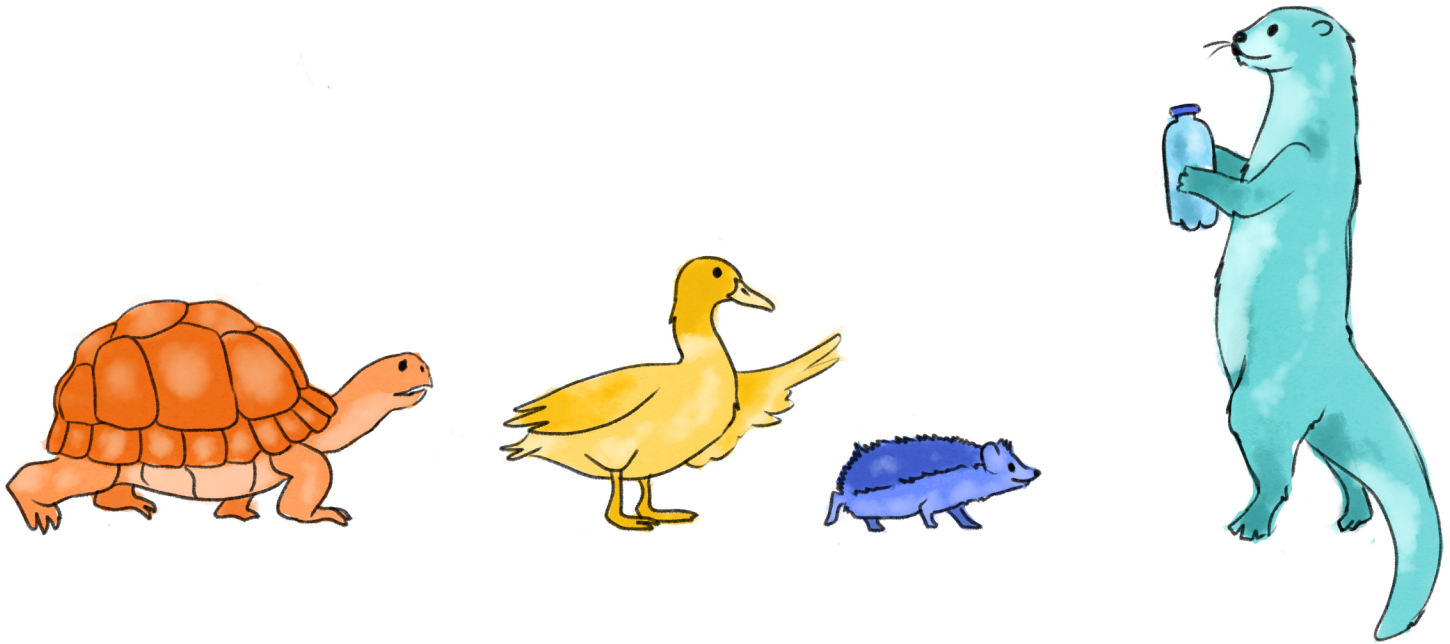
“We can’t do it alone, I have some friends who can help us,” says Ms. Skunk.



Mama and Ms. Skunk travel to different forest homes to tell their friends about the new strange fish and ask for their help.



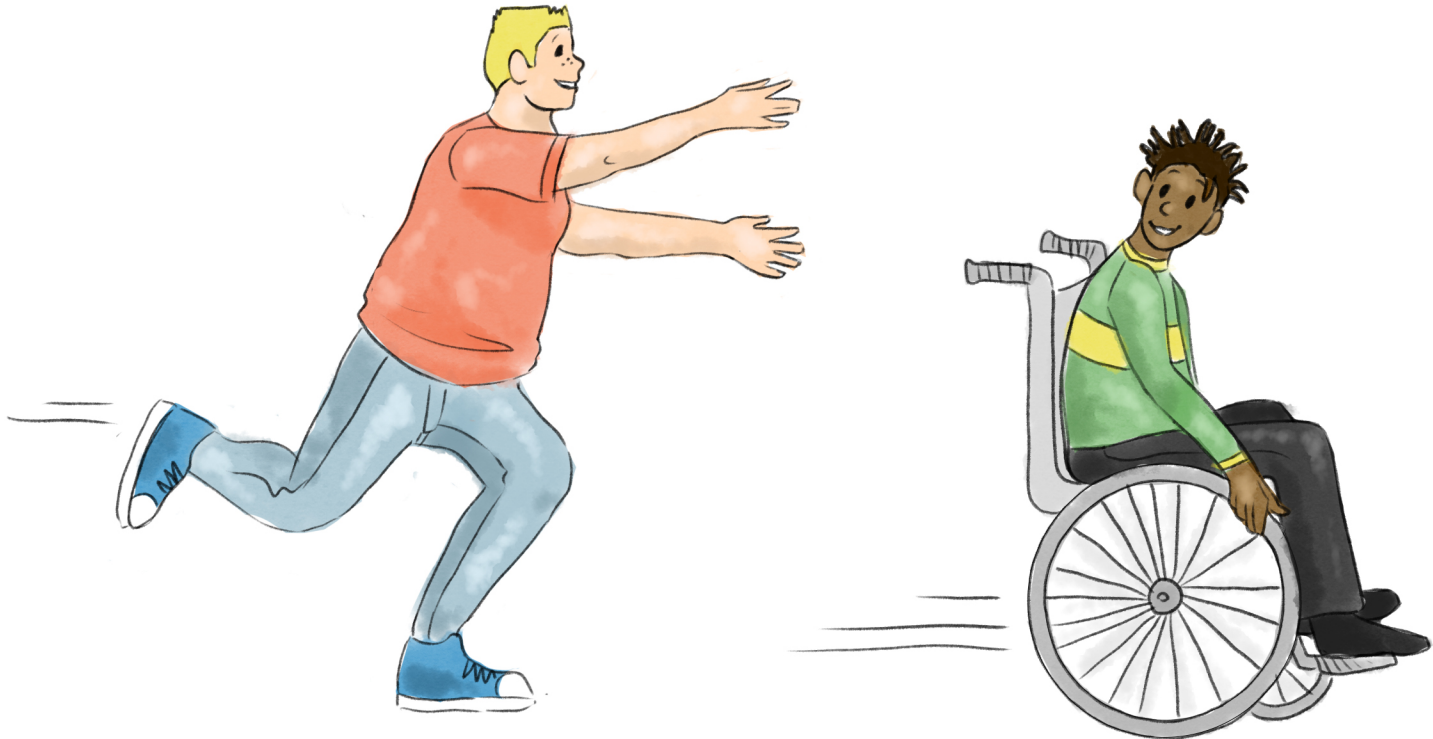
She tells them her idea: Mama Otter and her band of forest critters will speak to the humans so they will remove the strange creatures that they introduced into the water.



So, Mama Otter and her friends make their way to the city park.



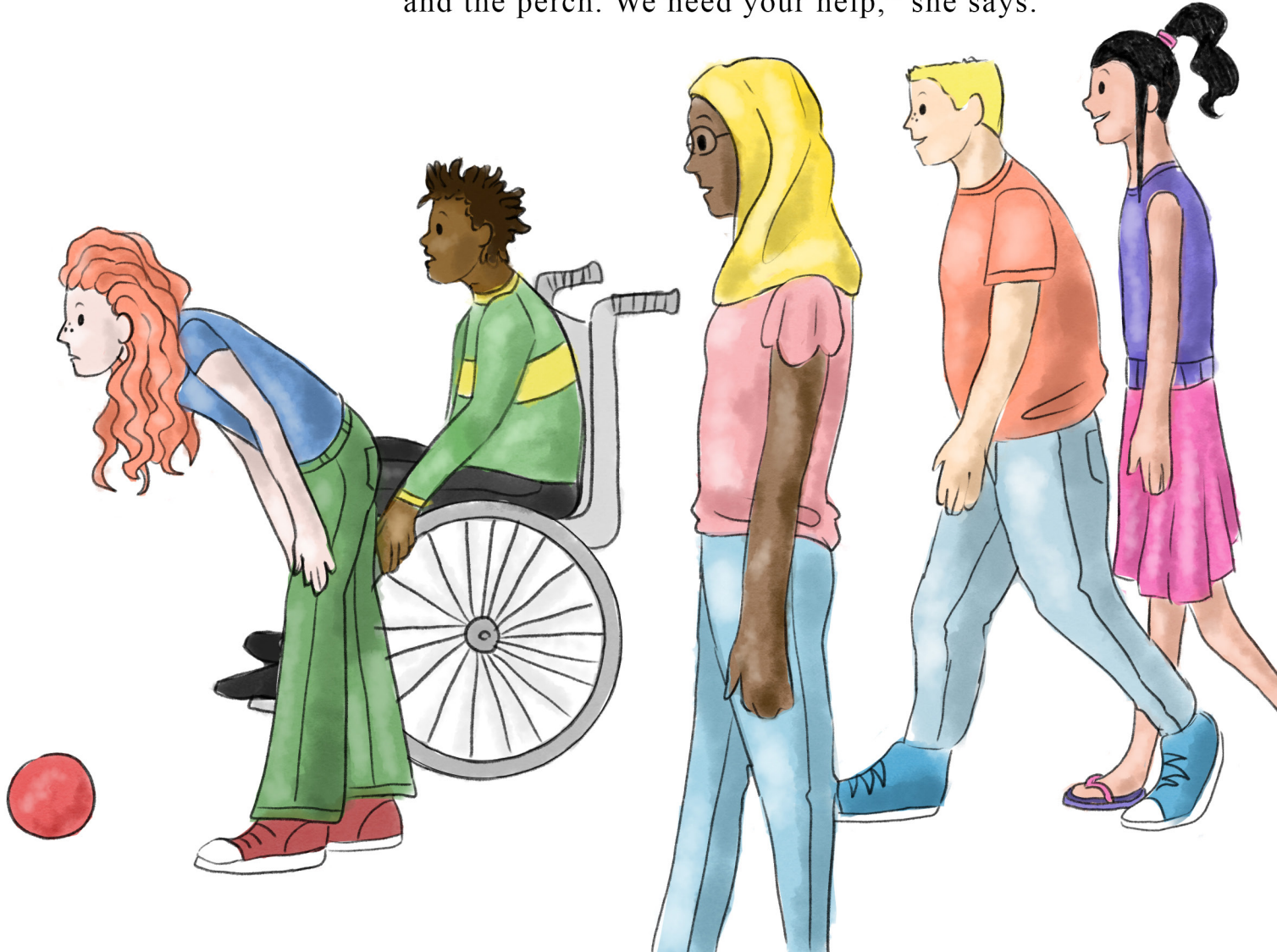
The kids run around the playground with glee and their smiles light up the day.



But when Mama Otter starts speaking,
everyone stops to look.



“Our fish are gone and I can’t feed my babies without the trout and the perch. We need your help,” she says.

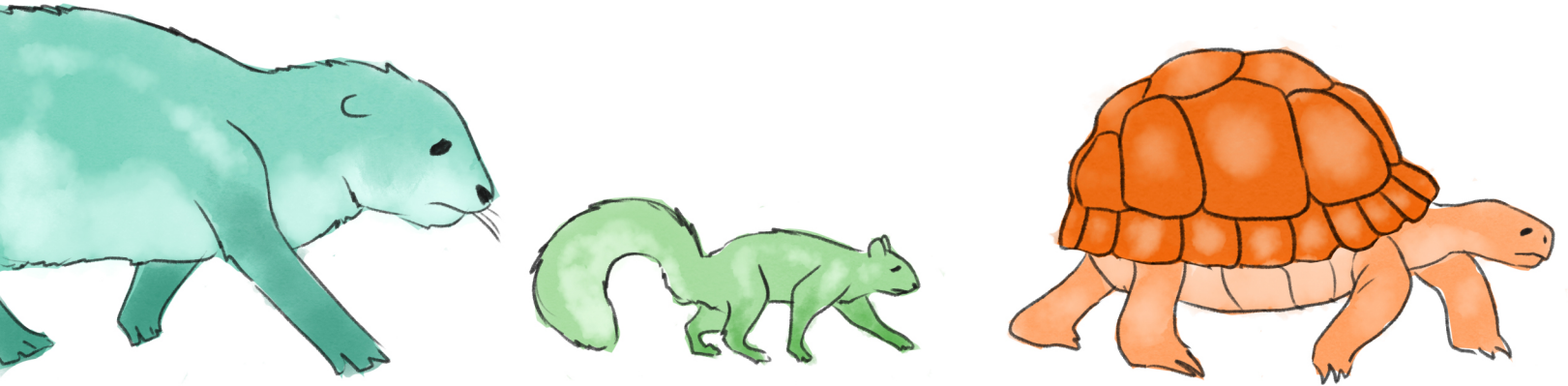


“But what can we do, Mama Otter?” a girl asks.

“We need to remove the strange fish, but we cannot clean the river alone,” Mama answers.



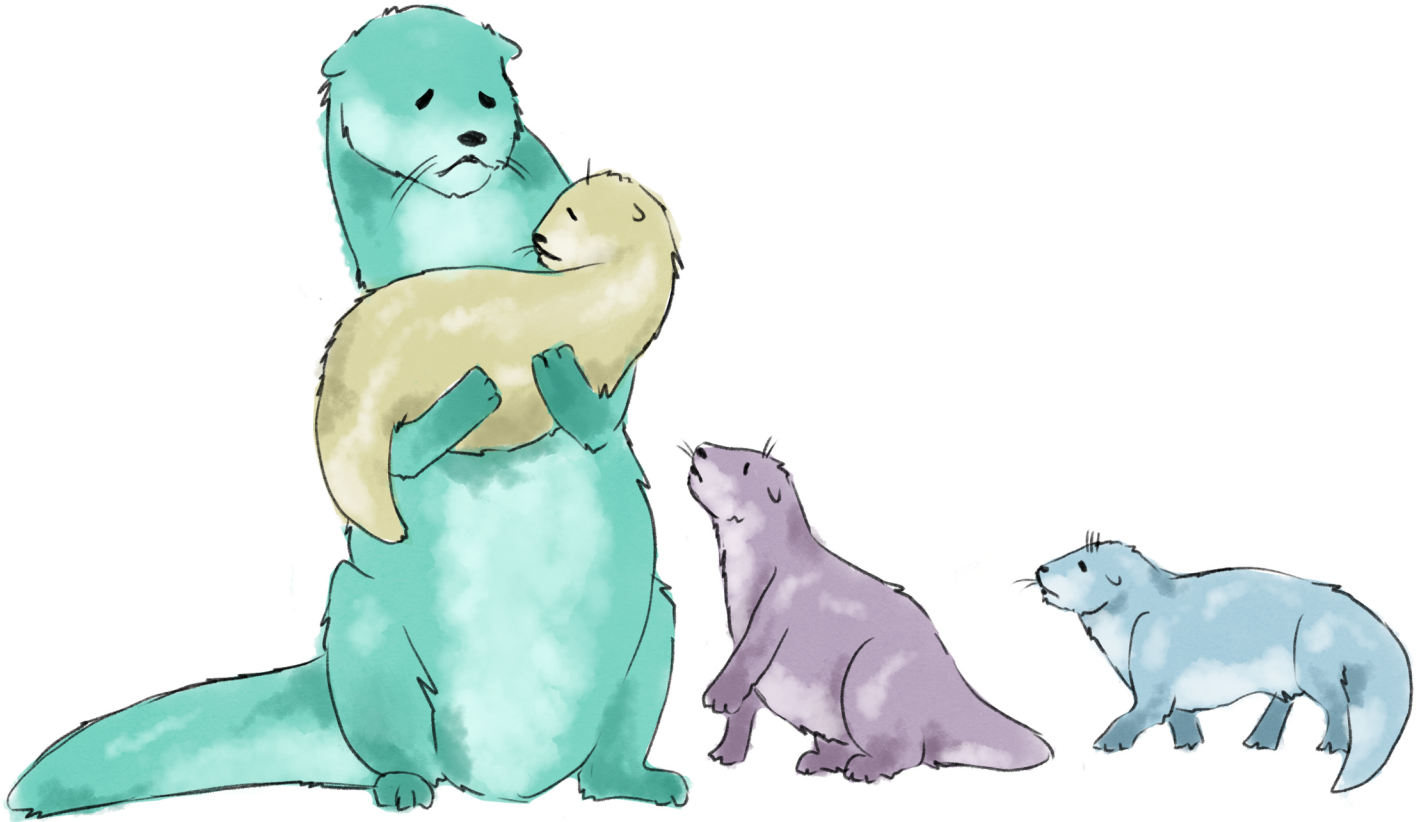
Even though all the children want to help, they first need to speak with their parents. So, Mama and her friends return home with only hope that the children might arrive one day to clean the river.



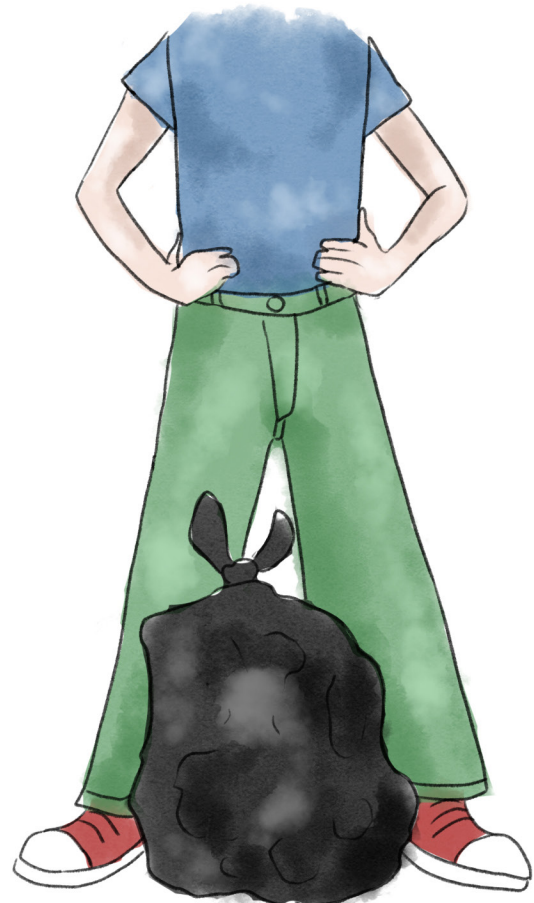
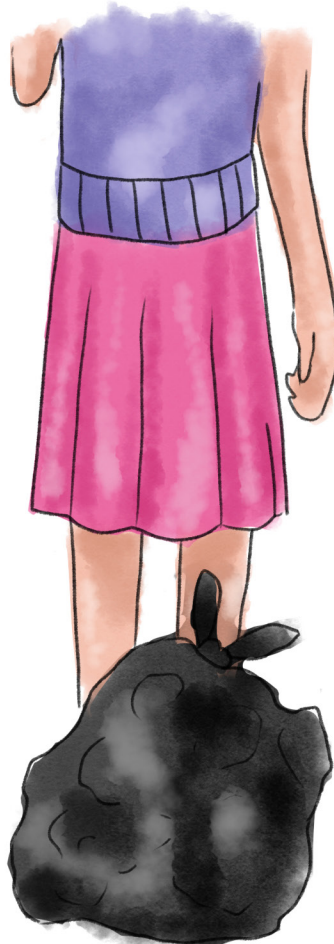
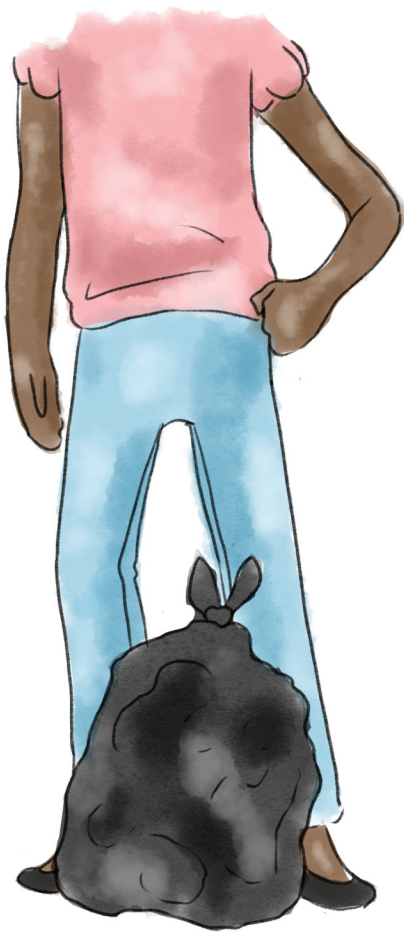
A day goes by and Mama and Papa Otter are out of ideas. They snuggle their pups hoping the children will arrive.



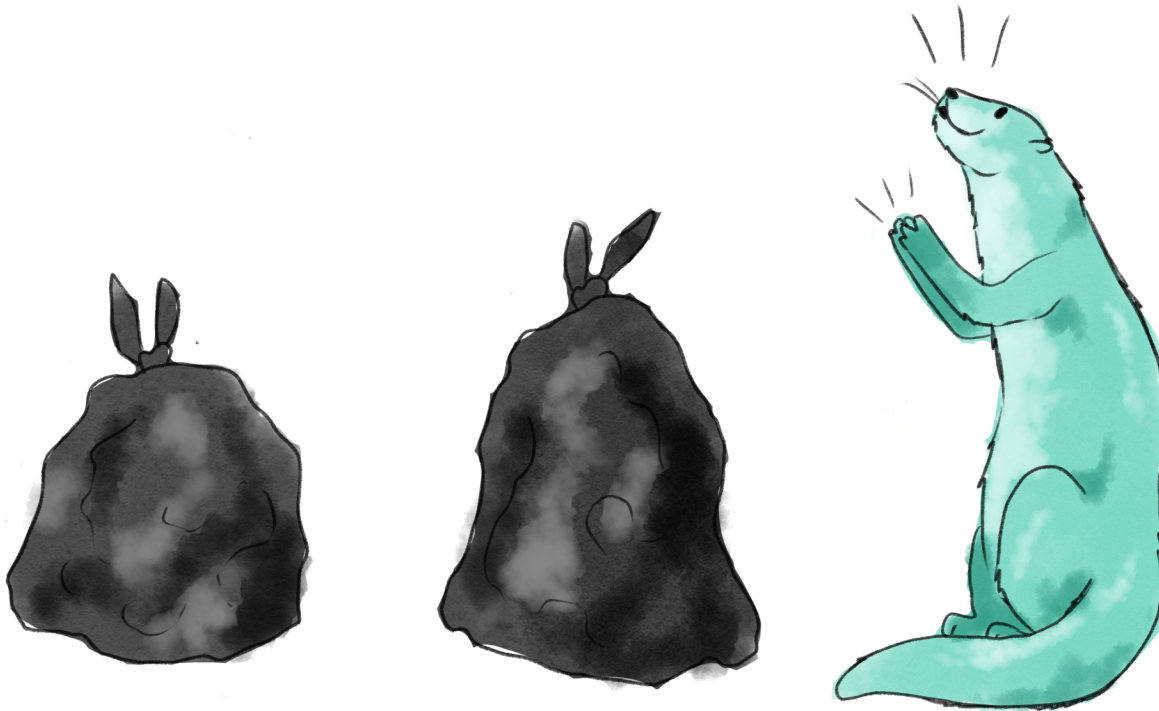
Another day passes and Mama starts to lose hope.
What is there left to do to save her puppies?



But just when she is about to give up, she hears chatter from the trees.
Soon, the children scramble into the clearing,
each holding a trash bag of their own.



Mama Otter is joyous as she and her forest friends join
the kids to clean up the river.




Very soon the trout and the perch return and
Mama Otter can feast.



Within just a few days, the puppies regain their color and all is well on the river bank.





Mama Otter saved the day,
and so can you...